



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

economic interpretation would allege poverty as the cause. The jack-pots in various states, and the costs of presidential campaigns are too patent refutations. And recent investigations of vice in our cities and of women in industry seem to show that poverty-vice is not the nexus even in as many of these cases as we had supposed it to be, much less in the case of the patrons of vice. Nor does it seem that the author's emphasis upon the naturalness of goodness is wholly justifiable. In our complex social system the primitive order of things, as Ross and others have pointed out, must be changed to meet the conditions of a new and more artificial civilization before goodness as we understand it can be attained. However, the author does not follow these principles relentlessly throughout his discussion but includes many other factors in his analysis of the religious situation.

Many other views of more or less academic interest are to be found in the earlier chapters. The defect of the book lies in the indirectness and brevity of the discussion of the actual present status of religious thought and church work. The inadequacy of these two phases of religion in the present situation is so patent and the remedies so plain that the reader becomes impatient of the rather long and painstaking analyses that furnish a theoretical basis for statements that are admittedly true.

FRANCES FENTON BERNARD

GAINESVILLE, FLA.

---

*A Peasant Sage of Japan: The Life and Work of Sontoku Ninomiya.*

Translated from the *Hotokuki* by TADASU YOSHIMOTO. Longmans, Green & Co., 1912. Pp. xxviii+254. \$1.50.

The book consists of thirty-three short chapters and five divisions of an appendix. It is the story of the life-work of a remarkable peasant of Japan, Kinjiro Ninomiya, called after his death, "Sontoku," meaning, "The Virtuous." The story is simple and essentially human, and emphasizes in a forceful way the unity of disinterested service for mankind the world over. It presents a picture of social service of an almost modern type and almost more than modern idealism carried on a hundred years ago by a follower of Buddha and Confucius in a country then closed to the civilized world.

The volume is a translation, more free than literal, of another written the year following the death of Sontoku by his greatest disciple, Kokei Tomita. That volume was entitled *Hotokuki* meaning literally "A Record of the Return (Repayment) of Virtue." It was widely distributed at the instance of the emperor, and has been recently republished

by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, and is now read all over Japan. The translator says the book "is still proving a light to hundreds of thousands in Japan, and a great help and inspiration to all kinds of social workers. Hence this translation." There may be in the book some slight idealization of Sontoku's work such as one might expect from a favorite disciple.

The Peasant Sage was born in 1787 and died in 1856. The student of heredity will be interested to note that his father was called "The Good," and made himself poor by giving away his property. From the earliest efforts of the orphan child to support himself, on through his whole life the lesson that industry, frugality, and most of all disinterested service with men and material possessions was increasingly demonstrated to Sontoku and to those who knew him. His life-work was that of building up ruined and bankrupt agricultural estates for various feudal lords, communities, and the central government. In undertaking each of these various tasks "he studies the local conditions, the possibilities of soil and situation, the numbers and habits of each family. He inspires confidence, stimulates courage, and renews hope. He aims at restoring prosperity by re-creating character, evoking energy, and insisting on regularity of work and continuous industry. He himself shared the life of those among whom he toiled; ate their simple food and wore their cotton clothes; refused all official dignity, and bore the burdens of his people, asking no reward."

Like all successful leaders of men, Sontoku was a shrewd observer. He everywhere seemed to understand cunning, selfish flatterers, and frequently was able to convert them to lives of honesty and industry. He dealt very generously with the honest, industrious, and faithful, and tried repeatedly to convert the malicious and lazy. He studied carefully the character of the needy before giving them financial aid. He said one did more harm than good by gifts to the undeserving poor; but he also said: "There is some good in every man's heart and few people are so bad that they cannot be converted."

Sontoku's doctrine of conduct and work were summed up by his disciple under four heads as follows: First, its foundation is sincerity, "even as God is sincere"; second, its principle is industry, "even as heaven and earth and all creation are ever at work without repose"; third, its body is economy, "to live simply and never exceed one's rightful means"; fourth, its use is service, "to give away all unnecessary possessions, material, or other, in the service of heaven and mankind."

The great practical result of Sontoku's work during his life was the restoration of many large estates which had fallen into ruin, the opening-

up of much land new to agriculture, the general improvement of agricultural labor and life, and the stimulation of thousands of people to a life of industry, frugality, and unselfish service. The practical result which has followed the death of the Sage is the widespread formation of a society called "Hotokusha"—virtually a co-operative society which has proved "a great boon to the poorer classes of people."

The Hotokusha was organized by Fukuzumi, a strong disciple of Sontoku, in harmony with the latter's instructions. It consists of a central society and many widespread branches.

The purpose of this society is to help the poor and to aid them to unite in helping one another, first by opening their hearts and developing goodness of character among them, and secondly by assisting them to open wild lands, improve irrigation and roads, repair bridges and river banks, and, in general, by doing all that is of benefit to the poor. It begins by helping the poorest and by encouraging and rewarding the good. The function of the central society is to give financial help, as well as advice, to the branches; so its members are well-to-do persons who freely give their money and services in order to show their gratitude to heaven by helping their fellow-men, and they expect no material reward for themselves. The branch societies consist of poorer men who pay a small subscription known as the "daily subscription money." . . . The money thus subscribed by the poor, together with money received from the central society, forms a fund from which loans are made to members. . . . No interest is charged, because the purpose of the society is to help the needy.

Sontoku emphasized the value of preaching, as well as living, his doctrine. Disciples were always about him, and he often taught them far into the night. Once when his lord asked him to open up some wild land, he said to his disciples: "My wish is to open up the wilderness of men's hearts."

The life of the Peasant Sage of Japan seems to be only another evidence that among any people and at any time independence, self-sacrifice, and spiritual vision give a man power.

ALBERT ERNEST JENKS

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

---

*Changing America. Studies in Contemporary Society.* By EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS. New York: The Century Co., 1912. Pp. 236. \$1.20.

Like the *Foundations of Sociology*, the present volume is a group of occasional papers on subjects with sufficient unity of content to be combined under a general title. There, however, the resemblance ceases. These pieces were nearly all originally written for popular periodicals